



Minutes
Deschutes County
District Mapping Advisory Committee (DMAC)

Thursday, October 16, 2025, 5:30 p.m.

Deschutes Services Building, Barnes Sawyer Room (1st Floor), 1300 NW Wall Street, Bend

This meeting was conducted in person and by video. It was video recorded and can be accessed on the committee website: [District Mapping Advisory Committee \(DMAC\) | Deschutes County Oregon](#)

I. Introduction

This meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Facilitator and Chair Neil Bryant.

Attendees: Chair/Facilitator: Neil Bryant. Committee Members: Bernie Brader, Drew Kaza, Matt Cyrus, Melanie Kebler, Ned Dempsey, and Phil Henderson.

Staff: Nick Lelack, County Administrator and Jen Patterson, Strategic Initiatives Manager.

Bryant convened the listening session, outlined the order for public testimony beginning with in-person participants and then Zoom, and noted that committee member Carol Loesche was absent for a previously planned family birthday out of town. He noted Loesche would listen to the recording and review written testimony and described her as a long-term Bend resident and chair of the League of Women Voters. He reminded attendees of materials available in the room and indicated this was the committee's eighth meeting.

II. Background on DMAC and Format for Listening Session

Bryant outlined the three-step process under which the District Mapping Advisory Committee was appointed by the Board of County Commissioners to develop a recommended five-district map, after which the Board would decide whether to place a measure before voters. He stated the committee expected to complete its work in November and that the Board would likely make its decision in December to meet ballot filing deadlines for a potential May 2026 election. He clarified that if a ballot measure did not pass, county commissioner elections would remain at-large. Bryant emphasized that the session was for listening rather than debate, that DMAC could not change the number of districts or the makeup of the commission, and that speakers would have three minutes; he referenced sign-up sheets and indicated he would gently keep speakers to time.

Bryant had each committee member provide a brief background and biography before beginning the public comment section starting with himself.

Bryant previously served as a state senator for eight years and as a member of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for eight years, chairing it for the last four. He noted roles as a member and president of the Chamber of Commerce and referenced service with the High Desert Museum and OMSI. Bryant expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to work with the group on the districting task.

Phil Henderson introduced himself as Oregon-born, with residence in the Columbia Gorge during his youth. He arrived in Bend in 1989 to practice law, operating a solo law practice for 14 years before moving into construction leadership, including serving as president of a large construction company and subsequently operating his own firm for six years. He served as a Deschutes County Commissioner from 2017 to 2021 and currently practices some law and is semi-retired, residing in Bend.

Melanie Kebler is the Mayor of Bend, grew up in Bend, lives in Southeast Bend, and is a Bend High graduate. She emphasized that she is happy to serve and assist with the problem at hand.

Andrew “Drew” Kaza introduced himself as a native Oregonian who spent approximately twenty-five years overseas before returning to Oregon. He and his wife took over the Sisters Movie House and Cafe in 2016, which he has operated for roughly nine years. He resides in Redmond and is a father of six and co-chair of the Oregon Independent Party.

Bernie Brader, veteran of the United States Air Force, learned a trade in the Air Force which developed into his career for the next 40 years in industrial water treatment. For the past 20 years he has served on the board for the La Pine Frontier Days. Brader is a member of the Ponderosa Mountain Men and the President of the La Pine RC Flyers. His son and daughter-in-law live in La Pine and he has five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Matt Cyrus is a sixth-generation Oregonian whose family homesteaded Central Oregon prior to the formation of Deschutes County. He noted his involvement in agriculture, identified himself as the Deschutes County Farm Bureau President, and he has served forty-five years as a volunteer firefighter. He currently serves on the Planning Commission and works as a wildland firefighting contractor.

Ned Dempsey is an engineer who moved to Oregon in 1974 and founded Century West Engineering in Bend. He recounted the firm’s role in the 1980s Bend sewer project installing eighty-five miles of pipe and stated the firm has since grown to a regional firm with ten offices in the Northwest. Dempsey has served in statewide roles including chairing the Oregon’s Futures Commission, chairing the Climate Change Commission, serving as chair of the Oregon Business Council’s Sustainability Board, and serving two terms on the State Sustainability Board.

III. Public Comments

Bryant opened public comment, reiterating the expectation that speakers state their name and

address for the record, with in-person comments taken first and Zoom participants next.

Jared Black, from Bend, commended the committee for selecting two maps under challenging and somewhat ill-defined direction. Black expressed a preference for Map B (also referenced as Map 3B). He supported using more recent data such as registered voter information rather than relying on decennial census counts that were conducted during the COVID-19 period, which he characterized as flawed. He added from his experience on a citizen committee that citizen committees work best without elected officials serving as members.

Greg Bryant resides in Bend and has attended previous DMAC meetings. Bryant submitted a map referenced by the DMAC as PS 3. He noted that during the October 15 DMAC meeting he believes the data associated with his map are incorrect and that staff have been informed of his information.

Eliza Davis, from Tumalo, explained that she and her family are Tumalo farmers living in an unincorporated area. She supported creating districts so rural issues are represented and stated a preference for Map B, explaining that Map A includes more suburban precincts (35, 20, and 11) whereas Map B replaces some of those with Precinct 49, which she believes better aligns with communities of common interest for her area.

John Blackfort, from an unincorporated area outside of Bend, stated that the commissioners gave the DMAC an impossible task, creating equal districts using obsolete data. On Wednesday, by a 4-3 vote, the DMAC agreed to make voter registration the primary data to use. No other county in Oregon does it this way, and congressional districts are not done that way and by using voter registration date the county could open itself up to litigation. Using voter registration data disenfranchises the residents of the county. He believes it's just wrong, every person matters, not just voters. He is also in favor of having at-large districts.

Lynn Connelley, from Southeast Bend in an unincorporated area, objected to proceeding with districting at this time. She attributed initiation of the process to a May 5, 2025, Board majority, asserted that the majority influenced committee selection, and argued voters approved expansion to five commissioners but did not necessarily endorse districting. She questioned criteria such as contiguity and the requirement for five districts, suggested alternatives (e.g., at-large structures), and urged pausing so a five-member board after 2026 could consider bipartisan, non-gerrymandered maps.

Chris Piper, a Bend resident for twenty years, said he convened a neighborhood discussion on the topic and offered three points from the neighborhood conversation. First, balance one-person-one-vote with avoiding concentrated voting power in the largest city, even considering flexibility beyond a five-percent variance if needed. Second, be transparent about supplementary data (e.g., building permits, current voter rolls) and show how choices minimize variance while respecting communities of common interest (natural resources, agriculture, transportation). Third, fully document criteria application to demonstrate a fair map consistent with prohibitions on

favoring any party or person.

Casey Roscoe, from Tumalo, described becoming engaged in community politics through the “mule deer overlay” proposal, citing examples of proposed rules she viewed as impractical for rural life (fence clearances, permits for outdoor gatherings, limits on dogs outside). She said those rules felt driven by city perspectives and that her community did not feel represented. Turning to the maps, she indicated the first option would not leave Tumalo feeling represented, said the second one’s better,” and suggested the committee visit communities like Tumalo to hear their specific issues before finalizing lines.

Gwen Baker-Yuill, from Bend, asked for a pause so that all five county commissioners can participate in the process once seated, expressing concern that proceeding now could appear to weaken the influence of incoming commissioners.

Kerie Raymond, from Bend, stated she supported expanding the commission to five members but had not anticipated districting would follow. She favored at-large elections and, citing experience with ranked-choice voting in Australia, questioned running for fixed “positions” rather than simply selecting the best five people. Her comments concluded with thanks to the committee.

Tony Oliver, from Redmond, said she prefers Map A. From her rural perspective living between Sisters and Redmond, she felt Map A would serve rural areas well and did not believe Bend would “take over,” because commissioners would defend the interests of their respective districts. She concluded that Map A could be most effective for the county.

Keith Rockow, from Remond, supported using current precinct lines, noted significant growth expected before the next census and data release (2031–2032 after the 2030 census), and framed core service concerns residents will raise with commissioners (roads, traffic, housing, solid waste). He emphasized that neighborhood access to a commissioner would matter as growth adds strain, and he urged keeping that in mind when choosing a final map.

Lee Lucas, from rural Deschutes County, said that representation should reflect the Board of County Commissioners’ responsibilities and therefore suggested it is not useful to rely on fire, road, or school district lines to define communities of interest. He recommended continuing without pausing, using voter data rather than census data, and proceeding with creating five districts. He also stated having compiled precinct data into a spreadsheet and observed that six precincts appeared to have more voters than people, attributing this to an anomaly between old census data and precinct growth.

Lena Berry, from Redmond, thanked the committee for an evening and virtual option, asked for additional opportunities outside work hours, and advocated countywide at-large elections for all five seats using ranked-choice voting so all commissioners are accountable countywide and communities are not competing for resources. She viewed the timing as problematic amid rapid growth and said

that when DMAC forwards a map to the Board it should note the volume of public input; she closed by saying she looks forward to voting down the district map in lieu of at-large seats.

IV. Wrap Up and Adjourn

Bryant adjourned the meeting at 6:21 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Jen Patterson, Strategic Initiatives Manager,
Deschutes County Administrative Services